

Mission Statement

The MRWG agreed by consensus on the following mission statement:

Using the best ecological and socioeconomic and other available information, the Marine Reserve Working Group (MRWG) will collaborate to seek agreement on a recommendation to the Sanctuary Advisory Council regarding the potential establishment of marine reserves¹ within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary area.

Problem Statement

Fundamental to the MRWG's ability to develop goals, objectives, maps, and implementation recommendations was their consensus agreement on the following problem statement:

The urbanization of southern California has significantly increased the number of people visiting the coastal zone and using its resources. This has increased human demands on the ocean, including commercial and recreational fishing, as well as wildlife viewing and other activities. A burgeoning coastal population has also greatly increased the use of our coastal waters as receiving areas for human, industrial, and agricultural wastes. In addition, new technologies have increased the efficiency, effectiveness, and yield of sport and commercial fisheries. Concurrently there have been wide scale natural phenomena such as El Nino weather patterns, oceanographic regime shifts, and dramatic fluctuations in pinniped populations.

In recognizing the scarcity of many marine organisms relative to past abundance, any of the above factors could play a role. Everyone concerned desires to better understand the effects of the individual factors and their interactions, to reverse or stop trends of resource decline, and to restore the integrity and resilience of impaired ecosystems.

To protect, maintain, restore, and enhance living marine resources, it is necessary to develop new management strategies that encompass an ecosystem perspective and promote collaboration between competing interests. One strategy is to develop reserves where all harvest is prohibited. Reserves provide a precautionary measure against the possible impacts of an expanding human population and management uncertainties, offer education and research opportunities, and provide reference areas to measure non-harvesting impacts

¹ A marine reserve was defined by the Marine Reserves Working Group as a "No Take" zone.